

Dear U.S. Embassy,

I was deported from the United States several years ago even though I am married to an American citizen. My sister is getting married this summer in New York and I really want to go to the wedding. What do I need to do to be able to travel? Can I get a limited visa just for the wedding? What do I need to do to return permanently to the United States?

Kerwin in Couva

Anyone previously deported or removed from the U.S. must reapply for a visa in order to reenter the U.S. But keep in mind you may be prohibited from returning to the U.S. for up to 20 years, depending on the circumstances of your removal. You were informed of your “period of inadmissibility” as part of your deportation or removal process. Yes, you can always reapply for a visa at any time. But if this time period has not yet expired, even if you otherwise overcome the presumption of being an intending immigrant, you will be found ineligible for the visa and informed whether a waiver is available. Individuals with long, recent stays in the U.S. often face difficulties demonstrating their ties to Trinidad and Tobago.

Even if you weren’t officially “deported,” the consular officer will want to know about your prior travel to the United States and will especially want to understand any long stays there. You should come to your visa interview prepared to discuss any prior time in the United States – as a student, as a tourist, or when travelling on business. Bring all of your old passports to the interview, as well as any official documents relating to your deportation or removal. If you were given permission to extend your stay or adjust your status, please provide documentary evidence.

Being married to an American citizen does not guarantee your eligibility for a tourist (or nonimmigrant) visa or an immigration visa. If you are married to a U.S. citizen, or if you have an immediate relative with U.S. citizenship, your spouse or relative may file an immigration petition for you with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). After USCIS approves the petition, your case will be forwarded to the Embassy. If you are otherwise found to be qualified for an immigrant visa, but were previously deported, you will be denied the visa and informed whether a waiver is available. The final decision whether to approve or deny a waiver request rests with USCIS.

Please visit our website at <http://trinidad.usembassy.gov> for more information on immigrant or non-immigrant visas, or information on other ways of travelling to the United States. If you have any additional questions about any aspect of the visa application process, please write to us at ConsularPOS@state.gov.

We hope this has been helpful.